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Approved For Release 2003/10/29 : CIA-RDP80B01676R001000200058-8

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : USIS - HELSINKI

15
DESP. NO.

002113

TO : ~~USIA - WASHINGTON~~
~~STATE DEPARTMENT OF STATE WASHINGTON~~October 7, 1955
DATE

REF : Our Desp. # 65 June 29, 1955

4 For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.	IN F O	OTHER	11/5 IAE 10/1E 1G C 1R1 10/1C 1PS 1M 10/1S
	REC'D				
	10-18				State COM CIA

SUBJECT: Television Developments in Finland.

The issue of whether Finland's eventual TV network should be established with a Western or Soviet technical system is rapidly coming to a head. With Tallinn now telecasting Finnish programs every Saturday night (The program of October 1 included 25 minutes on the visit of President Paasikivi and Premier Kekkonen to Moscow) -- and with the Helsinki experimental station, using primarily USIS film material, demonstrating its ability to transmit programs also, the Finnish public is coming to realize that TV is here to stay. As a result, the question is no longer whether Finland will have TV, but rather which system of transmission should be adopted by the Finnish station when it is established.

The Communists naturally argue in favor of the Soviet system. An example of the Communist argument is the following article (translated) from Työkanen Sanomat, of September 29, 1955:

FUTURE TELEVISION PROBLEM MUST BE SOLVED IN A
MANNER THAT SUITS OUR COUNTRY

During the past few weeks and days, discussion about television has directed itself, more and more, on practical questions. The visibility of the Tallinn broadcasts on this side of the Gulf is a fact and it has aroused the public. For the conservative newspapers and to other wagers of cold war, again, it is a bitter dose to swallow. The following examples of headlines in the Conservative rural press and the Erkkö press testify to it plainly:

"Imports of Television Sets Still Premature."

"Commercial Imports Still Premature."

"East German Sets At Dumping Price"

"Acquisition of East European Equipment Would Be Squandering"

After the Seximo Oy announced that it will retail Soviet television sets, among other things, the "KVN-49" type, a popular set at 36,500 Fmk, the
Licensing Bureau and

State Department review completed

RAFordham/BATHirkfield/sm

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Licensing Bureau and the Electricity Control Office have also gotten mixed up in the matter. Apparently, the experiences obtained from the imports of the Soviet "Pobeda" cars are looming up in the minds of the leaders of the Conservative paper. For they need not "oppose" trade with the East, but, with appropriate arrangements, the prices of television sets could be doubled.

A number of "experts" have been made to step forward to express the opinion that, supposedly, the Central European -- i.e. West German -- TV system is the only possible one for Finland. The width of the picture channel is the concern here; in the West German system it "drives" the "sound station" to a distance of 4.5 MHz from the "picture station", and in the Soviet system (which is also used in East Germany and Czechoslovakia), to a distance of 6.9 MHz. In their statements, the "experts" seem to fail to notice a couple of important things.

First, the Soviet system, with its wider picture channel, gives better possibilities to improve the quality of broadcasts in the future than does the "narrow" West German system.

Secondly, the "experts" seem to have forgotten geography entirely. And the geographical distance of the transmission station from the receiving set is of essential value in TV operations.

A glance at the map shows that the already operating transmission stations of Tallinn, Leningrad, and Riga are closer to a receiver, for example in Helsinki, than the station perhaps to be built in Stockholm in a couple of years. Also from Turku the direct distance to Tallinn is shorter than that to Stockholm and the same is true of Tampere. To obtain a "field of vision" wider than Stockholm, again, is quite hopeless for Finnish television in the present stage of technical development. The distance from Finland to Copenhagen and Berlin, again, exceeds the bounds of permanent reception possibilities.

Ergo: the field of vision of an "East European" TV set can be extended to three operating stations -- Tallinn, Riga and Leningrad; in the field of vision of a West German set there are no operating stations.

The above arguments clearly show that the Finnish Radio (Yleisradio), when planning permanent TV stations, has all the reason to consider the adoption of the "East European" system with wide picture channels. The supporters of the West German system can be likened to "experts" who are of the opinion that the gauge of the Finnish railroads should be narrowed down, since it is the same as in the Soviet Union and wider than elsewhere in Europe.

As to the claim that the "East European" TV sets do not meet the safety requirements of the Finnish Electricity Control Office and the fire protection regulations in our country, it contains nothing essential with regard to the solution of the

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USIA - WASHINGTON

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regard to the solution of the TV problem.

In many imported electric equipments the local retailers have to make some smaller adjustments and changes -- for example, to substitute a net-connecting wire made of cord with rubber cable -- before they meet the safety provisions. With regard to Soviet television sets, the Electricity Control Bureau will have completed its control reports only in a couple of weeks' time.

While the Conservative newspapers are screaming about safety regulations in the television issue, they have also unearthed the slogan of "inter-Nordic" regulations. In Finland, however, we have our own regulations, the other countries their own. The only Nordic country that has its own TV station is Denmark, but it is improbable that even from there can we obtain experiences adaptable in our conditions. With Sweden, Finland has some common old laws, but they have nothing to do with modern technology.

So, for example, Sweden has left-hand traffic and it is not up to us to interfere with it -- as awkward as it seems to us. We should follow regulations that suit our conditions with regard to television; there is no need to borrow regulations or experiences from circles that do not have them themselves.

One cannot help detecting political intrigues behind the television interest of the Conservative papers. When now the Finns, by the aid of television, have an opportunity to receive information on the Soviet Union, the Conservative cold-war enthusiasts would again like to draw their iron curtain to cover it. It is up to public opinion to take care that our authorities will solve the problem of Finnish television, regardless of the cold-war enthusiasts, to the benefit of our people. (DLP)

(End translation)

On the other hand, non-Communist papers, as Työkanen Sanomat indicates, generally favor the western system, and we are confident would be very receptive to material supporting their view. Therefore we urgently request a series of articles -- either USIS Features or Magazine Reprints of up to 1200 words -- emphasizing the ultimate value of Finland's adopting a system that could be tied in with developing international TV networks of the West. Specifically, such articles might deal with such topics as: "Eurovision," technical developments in extending the range of TV transmissions, such as co-axial cables, relay towers, etc. Technical difficulties in integrating the various Western systems should not be disregarded, but the methods of overcoming such difficulties -- and distance -- should be the real theme.

As we would attempt to place most articles on an exclusive basis, we could use more than one on each of the topics suggested. That is to say we believe articles on Eurovision, for instance, if sufficiently different in origin, style, and approach, could be placed in several different newspapers or magazines.

Meanwhile.

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From USIS, Helsinki

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(Classification)

Page _____ of

Desp. No. _____

From _____

Meanwhile, we are undertaking research in our periodical files for material that could be adapted locally, and for specific articles on which copyright clearance might be requested.

Action Requested: Urgent provision of material supporting the adoption of western-type television system in Finland.

M. Lorimer Moe

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Public Affairs Officer

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OFFICE OF
THE DIRECTOR

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UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY
WASHINGTON

November 3, 1955.

Dear Allen:

The enclosed Despatch from our Public Affairs Officer in Helsinki gives further background on the Soviet television problem there.

We are proceeding to supply the material requested.

You have heard directly on this also, I believe, from Nelson Rockefeller, and I have informed him that we both are getting busy on it.

Sincerely yours,

Theodore C. Streibert
Director

Enclosure:

Despatch No. 15 of October 7,
1955, from Helsinki.

The Honorable
Allen W. Dulles,
Director, Central Intelligence Agency,
2430 E Street, N.W.,
Washington, D. C.

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ER 7-5957/11

Carl
Honorable Theodore C. Stredbert
Director
United States Information Agency
Washington, D. C.

Dear Ted:

Thank you for your note of November 3 enclosing the interesting dispatch from your man in Helsinki on the Finnish television problem.

I have referred it to the appropriate people here, and I am attaching for your information a copy of a letter on this same subject which I have recently sent to Nelson Rockefeller.

Sincerely,

Allen W. Dulles
Director

Enclosure

O/DCI/ [] :ma (10 Nov 55)

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- 1 - Reading
- ✓ 1 - ER (w/basic)

Orig w/copy of 4 Nov ltr to Rockefeller

JK